

Plan sets out how city and county will grow

A PLAN setting out how Leicester and Leicestershire will grow in the future is set to be agreed by local partners.

The Strategic Growth Plan has been developed by a partnership made up of Leicester City and Leicestershire County councils, the seven local borough and district authorities and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP). It puts forward proposals for future development, including housing provision, that will be needed to support population change, meet housing needs and support economic growth from now until 2050.

Following public consultation, a revised plan has been agreed by a members' advisory group representing all the partners. It will now be used to help shape the Local Plans that the city, borough and district councils are preparing or reviewing.

It will also be used to support bids for Government funding to deliver the infrastructure needed to support growth.

People were invited to comment on the plan by taking part in a county-wide consultation, which ran from 11 January until 10 May 2018. In total, 588 responses were received, 79 per cent of which were from members of the public, with others received from local businesses, developers, landowners, voluntary groups and stakeholders such as parish councils, the police and health.

The comments received were analysed and considered during the preparation of the revised Strategic Growth Plan, which is what is now being put forward.

The plan estimates that Leicester and Leicestershire needs 96,580 new homes and 367-423 hectares of employment land from 2011-2031. These homes have already been built, have planning permission, or are already allocated to be built in adopted or emerging Local Plans.

Beyond 2031, the plan identifies the need for a further 90,500 dwellings and additional employment land. Local Plans will deal with the detailed allocation of which sites will be brought forward for potential development.

Major infrastructure improvements would also be needed to allow for new growth. These include a new link road – the A46 Expressway – to the south and east of Leicester, connecting strategic highways to the west of the city with the M1 and A46 to the north-east. No decisions have yet been made about the exact route of this road, which would be subject to extensive further consultation before going ahead.

The A5 and A42 would also be upgraded to expressway status, supporting growth in these areas. Rail improvements are proposed, too, to provide improved connections to Coventry and Birmingham.

These road and rail improvements would require significant Government investment and would relieve congestion pressures along the M1 and more widely across the Midlands.

Key areas for potential growth are the city of Leicester and the corridor of land around the proposed new road. A secondary area for growth is identified in the north of the county – there would be a ‘Leicestershire international gateway’ close to East Midlands Airport and major employers in the area.

However, plans for a ‘southern gateway’, close to Magna Park, have been dropped after feedback from the consultation. Instead, the focus will be on the A5 corridor, where improvements to the A5 will support growth.

Growth and regeneration is also proposed for Melton, where it would support transport improvements and relieve congestion in the town.

The Strategic Growth Plan will now be considered by the local councils which developed it, with the aim of having the plan approved by mid-December.

To find out more about the plan, visit the website at llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk